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Author	Tomás Vergara
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**Berardi, Franco 'Bifo.' *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*.
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Tomás Vergara
University of Edinburgh

Berardi's Heroes (2015) analyses the intricate relationship between capitalism and mental health by exploring the proliferation of mass murder and suicide in the twentieth-first century. This book is not essential to achieve a better understanding of Berardi's theoretical edifice as a philosopher. Instead, Heroes offers a great application of his theoretical concepts on contemporary events, exhibiting how philosophy can be applied to contingent historical issues such as the ones dealt with by the book.

Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide (2015) is a close study of the underlying cultural logic at play in the relationship between capitalism and mental health. In order to achieve this purpose, the autonomist Marxist philosopher, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, examines some of the grimmest events in the twentieth-first century: mass shootings in American schools; anti-immigrant violence in Europe; the Japanese hikikomori; and the Korean suicide epidemic. Through his blend of Marxist philosophy and schizoanalysis, Berardi aims to draw a common thread among these catastrophic events and achieve a better understanding of the social aetiology at play in them. Berardi's claims are supported by his theoretical framework – the works of Deleuze and Guattari, Marx, and Baudrillard, among others – and a thorough empirical documentation comprising manifold sources: reports, blogs, interviews, manifestoes, statistics, and declarations.

While Berardi's claims are manifold and complex, the basic argument put forward in *Heroes* is fairly simple: post-90s neoliberal entrepreneurial capitalism fosters a competitive social landscape in which individuals are forced to compete against each other. Some of Berardi's most interesting claims are concerned with the consequences of this entrepreneurial model. According to Berardi, the entrepreneurial social field that positions workers as competitors has had a profound impact on the psychosphere of recent generations, leading to states of either panic or depression. In this context, people are objectively divided into winners and losers: a social field that operates as a neoliberal version of social Darwinism. By applying Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialisation, Berardi argues that the constant shift of social dynamics and the overabundance of stimulation – not only brought about by technology, but also the demands of the entrepreneurial field – leads, as a consequence, to fascist responses of resistance and reterritorialisation (124). These reactionary movements, in Berardi's view, always emerge from the exploitation of a "loser" mentality in opposition to the visible "winners" of the neoliberal system. An example of this is the social Darwinism explicitly or implicitly stated by some of the mass-shooters analysed in the book, such as the case of Eric Harris, one of the shooters of

the Columbine massacre, who wore a t-shirt reading the words 'Natural Selection' for the catastrophic event (50-51).

While *Heroes* does deal with Berardi's usual theoretical framework and concepts, its focus lies on the subject at hand: the relationship between capitalism and mental health as manifested in some of the most catastrophic events in the twentieth-first century. Berardi's theoretical framework combines elements from Marxist philosophy and psychoanalysis, similarly to Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, Alenka Zupančič, and Samo Tomšič. What distinguishes Berardi from said philosophers is his implementation of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis rather than Lacanian psychoanalysis, as well as his focus on the autonomist Marxist tradition rather than the Hegelian one. *Heroes*, however, is not really a philosophical work but the application of Berardi's theoretical framework to a sustained analysis of its subject. In order to achieve this purpose, Berardi does not only rely on philosophical concepts, but empirical documents and reports on the events he is dealing with. The book contains quotes from Pekka-Erik Auvinen's 'Natural Selector's Manifesto,' statistics on gun purchases in the United States and student running up debts in order to finance university studies, psychiatric reports on the mental health of school-shooter Seung-Hui Cho, and so on. Berardi combines these different elements to support his argument concerning the neo-Darwinist overtones that mass-shootings as a suicidal form of the Neoliberal will to win: 'No more capitalists and workers; no more exploiters and exploited. Either you are strong and smart, or you deserve your misery' (51). As Berardi remarks, a vast array of industrial companies around the world have 'increased productivity; set workers one against the other; displaced workers from their workplace in order to break their community and ultimately their resistance' (169). In this context of neoliberal competition, frailty and violence, as well as psychopathological states of panic and depression, are the logical results of 'the contemporary condition of lonely togetherness, of shared isolation' (73).

Berardi's corpus is extensive and deals with a plethora of different subjects comprising the Marxist autonomist tradition, schizoanalysis, the philosophy of Jean Baudrillard, and that of Félix Guattari. His theoretical edifice, however, is established on works such as *The Soul at Work* and *And: Phenomenology of the End*. Berardi's most recent work can be seen as a reiteration and slight development of these previous works, applying his theoretical foundation to current social events in order to analyse the overall political landscape of our era. *Heroes* follows this formula in the sense that it does not contain any considerable developments from the original foundations of his seminal work. What sets *Heroes* apart from his most recent work is its sustained focus on the subject at hand, which is rigorously followed throughout its entire length without any perceptible non-sequiturs. *Heroes* is perhaps Berardi's most thorough application of his philosophical edifice to concrete historical events. The approach to its subject is informed by the author's theoretical framework and the abundance of sources to support his claims. *Heroes* does not aim to be another philosophical work about the works of Karl Marx, Félix Guattari, or Jean Baudrillard, but a precise and focused analysis on the unsettling subject at hand.

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Author Biography

Tomás Vergara is PhD candidate at The University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on the relationship between politics and modes of temporality in contemporary works of speculative fiction. Tomás' academic interests revolve around the points of intersection between psychoanalysis and Marxist criticism. He is also interested in film studies, contemporary music and the philosophy Gilles Deleuze.